

The Buddha and His Teachings

The Buddha, who was a great spiritual teacher in the world, was born as a human being in India, present Nepal in B.C. 623. His personal name was Siddhattha and his family name was Gotama. His parents were king Suddhodhana and queen Mahamaya. According to Buddhist canon, he had practiced his spirit a lot in his previous lives as a Bodhisatta. As the results of his spiritual development, he was born with a great wisdom and merit. He received a good education as a prince as well as a child. Following the Indian custom, he was married quite young, at the age of sixteen, to a beautiful and devoted young princess Yasodhara. Living in luxury palaces, young couple spent a very happy life. Meanwhile prince Siddhattha wanted to realize the life and find a solution for suffering of mankind. At the age of 29, when his only son, Rahula was born, doing his great renunciation, he left his kingdom and became an ascetic searching for a solution to end suffering.

The young ascetic Gotama wandered for six years about the valley of the Ganges, meeting famous religious teachers, studying and following their traditional systems and methods, and submitting himself to rigorous ascetic practices. Siddhattha was not satisfied with those teachings and he gave up all traditional religions and methods. Finally he decided to practice his own way. One evening, he seated under a tree on the bank of the Neranjara River. Practicing the Noble Eight Fold Path, analyzing suffering and cause of suffering, he attained enlightenment at the age of 35. After his enlightenment, he was known as the Gotama Buddha, the supreme one, the enlightened one.

After his great discovery about the world to get rid of suffering, the Lord Buddha explained his discovery to the world kindly about 45 years. At the age of 80, he passed away. His noble disciples protected his teachings and they brought it from generation to generation.

The Buddha said very clearly, his teaching is not a creation, it is a discovery. Whether a Buddha appears or not in the world, his teaching is forever. We respect him because he discovered this world reality by himself without any help of others and preached it to the world. He himself explained his teachings' summary in a stanza. It is,

*'Sabba pàpassa akaranam kusalassa upasampadà,
Sacitta pariyodapanam etam buddànasànam'.* (Dhammapada)

Not to do any evil, do good and purify once mind is the message of all Buddhas.

All Buddhas who arise in the world during certain periods of time discover this very same message and kindly preach it to the world. In summary the Buddha pointed out to the world the path of happiness getting rid of suffering. Here we can see three steps. According to this message the Buddha's effort was avoiding going to hell, encouraging going to heaven and showing the path to liberation.

When we do evil, our mind is polluted. That polluted mind causes suffering in this life and hereafter. That is why the Buddha said not to do any evil. Not doing evil is not enough for happiness, but also we have to cultivate good for the real happiness with meritorious mind. Buddhism emphasizes the three merits for the happiness. The three meritorious deeds of generosity (*dana*), virtue (*seela*) and meditation (*bhavana*) cause us to succeed in this life and thereafter. If a person has done a lot of meritorious deeds in this life, it means that his mind is rich in merits. A Meritorious mind can gain happiness. When we do good deeds, it means our mind is pure, calm and quiet. A pure mind can bring happiness to our life. Further we have to understand the cause of suffering and getting rid of suffering in this life itself. That is why the Buddha explained how to purify once mind. Virtue, concentration or tranquility and wisdom with understanding of dependent origination cause us to get rid of all suffering and develop real happiness. Virtue means a very high level of discipline in behavior and speech with right vision. With a good discipline, if a person focuses his mind in a particular meritorious object such as loving kindness and breathing meditation, then he can concentrate his mind with pure thoughts. With that concentration, if one has to reflect on the world reality according to impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and selflessness (*anatta*) in the correct way. As a result, one can live without desire and hatred because there is no delusion. When he investigates that present moment he has only present moment as nothing comes to the present from the past and nothing goes to the future from the present. He sees the arising and disappearing of all his experiences at the moment very well. Then he can live as a person seeing the truth in a new fresh way. This is the ultimate truth that Buddhism teaches us to be able to get rid of all sufferings.

Very Important Doctrines in Buddhism

(To practice in our day to day life in the name of happiness)

The Triple Gem :- (The Most valuable things that we received as the result of previous merits)

The Buddha (Buddha's Enlightenment)
The Dhamma (Buddha's Teaching)
The Sangha (Buddha's Noble Disciples)

The Five Precepts :-

1. Abstaining from taking lives *(Pàràtipàta veramani)*
2. Abstaining from stealing *(Adinnàdànà veramani)*
3. Abstaining from sexual misconducting *(Kàmesumiccàcàrà veramani)*
4. Abstaining from false speech *(Musàvadhà veramani)*
5. Abstaining from taking intoxication drinks and drugs causing heedlessness
(Suràmeraya maddapamàdattànà veramani)

The Three Levels of practicing Buddha's message :-

First level - Education (*Sippam/ suta*), Economy (*Dhanam*), Health (*ârogya*) and Morality (*Samacariyà*)

Second level (Three Meritorious Deeds) :-

1. Generosity (*Dàna*)
2. Virtue (*Seela*)
3. Meditation (*Bhàvanà*)

(The Three Friends those who put the treasure inside)

Third Level (Three Disciplines)

1. Virtue (*Seela*)
2. Concentration (*Samàdhi*)
3. Wisdom (*Pannà*)

The Ultimate Goal of life :- Happiness (Keeping mind away from all defilements)

The Best Friend

- Awareness or Mindfulness
(according to matter or body, feelings, mental formation and mind)

Five Spiritual Faculties - 1. Confidence (*Saddhà*) 2. Energy (*Viriya*) 3. Mindfulness (*Sati*)
(Our real Heritage) 4. Concentration (*Samàdhi*) 5. Wisdom (*Pannà*)

The Highest knowledge that a person can gain to cease from suffering –

Knowledge (about Karmic force and The Dependent Origination)

Enemies that we should get rid of – Greed, Hatred, Delusion (Defilements/ Unwholesomeness)
(The enemies are those who steal our good internal human values)

Dhamma Reflexion - Loving Kindness/Friendliness(Metta), Honesty (Uju), Wisdom (Panna)

The Four Noble Truth – 1. The suffering (*Dukkha sacca*)
 2. The cause of suffering (*Samudaya sacca*)
 3. The cessation of suffering (*Nirodha sacca*)
 4. The path that leads to cessation of suffering (*Magga sacca*)

The Noble Eight Fold Path – Right Understanding (*Sammà Ditthi*)
 Right Thoughts (*Sammà samkappa*)
 Right Speech (*Sammà Vācà*)
 Right Action (*Sammà kammantha*)
 Right Livelihood (*Sammà ājīva*)
 Right Effort (*Sammà Vāyāma*)
 Right Mindfulness (*Sammà sathi*)
 Right Concentration (*Sammà samādhi*)

Spirit/ Nodule/Core /Base - Dependent Origination/ Cause and effect
 (The Foundation to understand impermanence)

Five Aggregates :- 1. Matter (*Rupa*) 2. Feeling (*Vedanà*) 3. Perception (*Sannà*)
 4. Mental Formation (*Sankhàra*) 5. Consciousness (*Vinnàna*)

How to investigate these five aggregates? As

1. Arising (*Samudaya*) 2. Ceasing (*Atthangama*)
 3. Enjoyment (*Assāda*) 4. Bad results (*ādinava*) 5. Liberation (*Nissarana*)

Causes to develop the wisdom –

1. Association with a good friend who explains the Buddha's real message
 (*Sappurisa sansevo*)
 2. Listening to the Buddha's Message (*Saddhamma savanam*)
 3. Wise Reflection (*Yoniso manasikāro*)
 4. Practice (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti*)

The Buddha's Message in nutshell – Get rid of all evil, do what is good, purify/cleanse one's mind

*'Sabba pāpassa akaranam kusalassa upasampadā,
 Sacitta pariyo dapanam etam buddānasānam'.*

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